

GO
N
I
X
N
I
L

SERVICE- LEARNING

&

*No Child
Left Behind Act of 2001*

TITLE IV

Safe and Drug-Free
Schools and Communities

DEFINITION

Service-learning provides thoughtfully organized experiences that integrate students' academic learning with service that meets actual community needs. Service and learning blend in ways that serve and enrich one another.

Service-learning is a method:

- 1** under which students learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized service experiences that meet actual community needs and are coordinated in collaboration with the school and community;
- 2** that is integrated into students' academic curriculum and provides structured time for a student to think, talk, or write about what they did and saw during the actual service activity;
- 3** that provides students with opportunities to use newly acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations in their own communities;
- 4** that enhances what is taught in school by extending student learning beyond the classroom and into the community, thereby helping to foster the development of a sense of caring for others; and
- 5** that is supported by regular assessment to provide feedback and guide improvement.

How does Title IV support service-learning?

Service-learning can be an effective means of meeting the goals of the Title IV program, promoting safe schools and communities that support academic achievement and encouraging drug-free and violence-free lifestyles. The “Safe and Drug-Free Schools and Communities Act” (Title IV, Part A) supports service-learning in several ways:

Authorized Activities

Part A, Subpart I,
Section 4115, (b) (2)
(E) (xix)

This section states that local education agencies (school districts) may receive funds for drug and violence prevention activities that may include community service and service-learning projects.

Part A, Subpart 2,
Section 4121, (a) (2)
(B)

This section allows funds to be used for community service and service-learning projects that are “designed to rebuild safe and healthy neighborhoods and increase students’ sense of individual responsibility.”

Community Service Grant Program

Part A, Subpart 2,
Section 4126

This section specifies that grants may be made to States to carry out programs under which “students expelled or suspended from school are required to perform community service.” Service activities are not viewed as punitive, but rather as a way to help students succeed and become valuable community citizens.

Mentoring Programs

Part A, Subpart 2,
Section 4130, (b) (1) (B)
(v)

This section makes assistance available for mentoring programs for “children with greatest need.” Programs that include peer mentoring and encourage student participation in community service and community activities may be funded under this category.

By linking Title IV and service-learning, students will be introduced to concepts and experiences that have the potential to increase their sense of community and can provide a safe learning environment. Students will develop a sense of caring and responsibility and understand the value of being a good citizen, while learning how to develop healthy lifestyles. To achieve these goals, service-learning programs must be designed with high-quality, ensuring that programs feature the components and strategies necessary for outcomes to be maximized. Providing data as evidence of effectiveness will be necessary to sustain the practice of service-learning.

LEGISLATION

EXAMPLES

Examples of service-learning models that could be adopted by Title IV programs

Elementary School Project

Students in the Spirit Lake Community School District in Iowa developed drug awareness public service announcements as part of their service-learning program. The public service announcements were recorded in local television studios and aired in time slots when many children were likely to be in the viewing audience. A video documentary segment about this program was included in the video, "Creating Hearts of Service: Service-Learning in Iowa."

Middle School Project

The Santa Fe Public Schools partnered with The New Mexico Suicide Intervention Project and the Natural Helpers Program to develop a school-based, peer-helping, service-learning program. Students in four Santa Fe middle schools and two high schools worked together on service-learning projects aimed at suicide and violence prevention. Students learned about the root causes of adolescent suicide and youth violence and received training in conflict mediation, leadership, and communication skills. Eighth-grade students were trained to be mediators in helping peers and younger students with conflict resolution. Silence the Violence Week was conducted in a number of schools where students passed out non-violence ribbons and buttons. Students created suggestion boxes at their schools so other students could provide ideas on how to reduce violence and improve the school climate. As a result of the program, student participants demonstrated increased academic achievement; became more engaged in school; developed their talents, creativity, communication, and problem solving skills; showed increased compassion and self-confidence; and expressed their need to make a difference and belong to their community.

High School Project

In Florida, community service programs for expelled or suspended students were developed as part of a collaborative effort between the Florida Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, Florida Learn and Serve, the Governor's Office of Drug Control, and other state education departments. The programs are designed to have students apply the skills and behaviors they need to learn to make positive contributions to their schools and communities. Activities for older students include receiving training in conflict resolution and helping younger students to resolve conflict; creating books for younger students who have few books; conducting simple home repairs for people in subsidized housing; and writing and performing plays, skits, songs, and raps on drug prevention, making good choices, avoiding teen conflict and pregnancy, and making good use of free time.

How do exemplary practices in Title IV relate to service-learning?

Service-learning as a strategy for Title IV service delivery shows enormous promise based on the research literature on what works for preventing violence and drug use, and working with expelled and suspended students. Title IV research literature indicates that safe and drug free schools are most likely to exist when:

- ◆ Specific measurable goals, objectives, and behavioral expectations are integrated into schools' educational missions and are made consistently clear and available to faculty, students, and their families;
- ◆ Teachers, staff, administrators, community members, families, and students are involved in decision-making and problem solving;
- ◆ Instructional methods allow realistic opportunities for all students to experience success and do not just focus on those in trouble;
- ◆ Strategies and programs are in place to promote positive relations between schools, families, and communities, including local public mental health and law enforcement agencies;
- ◆ Students can share their concerns and feelings in safe, trusting environments;
- ◆ Effective prevention and intervention strategies are utilized to reduce drug use, discipline problems, and violent incidents;
- ◆ Curricula encourages students' sense of responsibility and accountability;
- ◆ Academic courses are relevant to students' lives and students can easily see the connection;
- ◆ Instructional methods and administrative policies avoid labeling students and putting them in special groupings;
- ◆ Programs are regularly evaluated for refinement, improvement, and strengthening, and findings are disseminated to staff, families, and community agencies; and
- ◆ Schools have prepared students and faculty well so they know what to do if there is a crisis.

Resource List:

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice: <http://cecp.air.org>

National Center for Education Statistics: <http://nces.ed.gov>

The Challenge Newsletter: <http://www.thechallenge.org>

U.S. Department of Education: <http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/SDFS>



A planning and implementation guide is available to help you as you explore your options. You may obtain a copy by calling or writing to:
RMC Research Corporation
1512 Larimer Street
Suite 540
Denver, CO 80202
800-922-3636
303-825-3636
303-825-1626 (fax)
email: rmc@rmcdenver.com

This material has been prepared by RMC Research Corporation, Denver, Colorado and is based upon work supported by The Corporation for National and Community Service under Cooperative Agreement No. 01CA-CA0012 and the United States Department of Education, STAR Center under Grant Award No. S283A950031-02C, Subcontract No. D02-S2. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the view of The Corporation for National and Community Service or the United States Department of Education, STAR Center.

I'm interested ... Now what?

Confirm your eligibility

Title IV grants are awarded through an application procedure. For more information on the Title IV requirements and applications, check with your local district or state office of education. More information can also be found on the U.S. Department of Education's website, available at: www.ed.gov.

Plan your service-learning project

- ✓ Canvass the community to understand needs around safety and reduction of risk behaviors and willingness of community members to assist students;
- ✓ Develop agreements for student and community participation;
- ✓ Explain how supervision will take place;
- ✓ Provide information about liability and how problems will be handled;
- ✓ Delineate the obligations of each party;
- ✓ Develop an appropriate service-learning curriculum;
- ✓ Design student materials and orientation processes;
- ✓ Train those responsible for implementing the projects;
- ✓ Connect service-learning to the curriculum through written and oral reflection opportunities; and
- ✓ Conduct an evaluation to understand the program's effectiveness.

PLANNING